843 (585) (586) ance, divorce can only be obtained through the decree of the panchāyat (tribal council). Moreover, if it has not been performed, a man cannot claim the paternity of the child. The ceremony is called kanni kattodu or kanni hākodu (thread tying or throwing). The husband and wife are seated in the midst of those who have assembled for the occasion, and the former asks his father-in-law whether he may throw the thread round his wife's neck, and, having received permission, proceeds to do so. If he gets the thread, which must have no knots in it, entangled in the woman's bunch of hair (kondai), which is made large for the occasion by the addition of false (783) hair, he is fined three rupees. On the day of the ceremony, the man and his wife are supposed to be under pollution, and sit in the verandah to receive presents. The mats used by them for sleeping on are cleaned on the following morning, and they get rid of the pollution by bathing.

843 846 783 821 A first confinement must not take place within the house, and the verandah is converted into a lying-in chamber, from which the woman is, after delivery, removed to the outer apartment, where she remains till she is free from pollution by catching sight of the crescent moon. If a woman has been delivered at her 846 (777) father's house, she returns to the home of her husband within a month of the birth of the child on an auspicious 851 day. On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the milk and rice, and touch the tongue of the baby with them.

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path between the priest's home and the temple, or go beyond the territorial boundary of her own village. She must not collect dry firewood, lest she become barren. She must not face the village priest; so that when he starts out from his home for the temple he shouts "hu:hu:" (or rings a handbell if it is a Lingayat village) as a warning to *all* menstruating women to hide themselves. The girl must cook her own food while she is in seclusion, and cannot be supplied with it already cooked from her own home. Instead, every household in the village should give the girl a small amount of rice, chili, salt, pulse, millet flour or vegetables. Such gifts are not to be returned later in equal measurs.

3.12. A girl's first seclusion is for no fixed period. She can re-enter her home only on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, but it must be either the first day after the new moon or else whichever of these three days falls most closely before the full moon. Although this is the Badaga custom, today one out of five girls would instead go to the nearest town and, in Tamilian fashion, consult an astrologer as to the most auspicious day for re-entering the house. On that day she bathes outside the house, puts on a set of totally new clothes, and cuts her nails with a small knife. Along with the other new clothes she is given the traditional headcloth, which she ties over her head before entering the home or which is replaced by the end of a *sa:ri* held over her head, if she has adopted that mode of dress (Hockings 1979a). Only after sunset, when she can see stars, does the girl cross the threshold, doing so with the right, auspicious foot first. It is reported that she used to be led up to the threshold by five elderly women (Francis 1908: 131). Once inside she goes to the doorway that joins the two main rooms, kneels down, and touches her head to the floor. By this gesture she acknowledges that the further room, the *ogamane*, is a sacred place which she will never pollute by her menses. As the girl bows down, older people in that house say a prayer. She then stands and bows her head to the hand of the oldest person in the house, and then to all other relatives present. Next, accompanied by another girl of similar age such as a sister, she goes round the village and bows in the same manner to all people older than herself. On that occasion each household must offer her something to eat as a symbol of their mutual kinship. Generally the girl is given milk, but in a large village she may only taste a drop of that milk because she could not drink so much. And although the village may be large, the bowing cannot be postponed

village by this time, and there her relatives give her sweets, show her beautiful views, and if possible beautiful dresses. She has to be careful lest too many sweets lead to worms in her stomach or in her newborn child. It is not unusual for sexual relations to occur in the latter part of a pregnancy. Because of the dangers just stated, it does not occur in the fifth or eighth month, lest the woman miscarry. In the eighth or ninth month, however, the girl generally has a strong sexual desire, and in the last month the couple may discretely have intercourse. This is done with care: they lie on their sides or adopt some other position so that no weight is placed on the womb. This intercourse is said to satisfy the woman and ensure that she has no problem with the delivery. One old therapist used to advise when a delivery was late that the couple should have intercourse, and then delivery would follow within a day or two.

When the confinement is imminent, the woman moves back to her father's house, especially if it is her first pregnancy, because she will get better treatment there. While she is there everyone in the hamlet should feed her one meal. For subsequent births she may be allowed to remain at her husband's house, and may use the outer room for her confinement (Thurston 1909 : 109). For the first confinement, however, she is taken to her father's house even if she does not want to go.

Birth

4.6. Women generally deliver after the ninth month is completed, but some do so 10-15 days before this, others 10-15 days after. There may even be successful births at the end of the tenth month, generally in a subsequent delivery, not a woman's first. Such a birth, however, is probably accounted for by the pregnancy in fact having started only at the month following that which is being counted from. It is recognized that conception could have occurred on any day up to the one when the last menses was expected but failed to appear. Otherwise when a birth is a long time overdue it usually means there will be twins. One of these is always weak, and it needs the extra time to develop properly.

Some 40-50 per cent of women give birth a day or two before the new moon or the full moon; so they must be careful as the new moon and the full moon approach. Sometimes they give birth

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844 in the days immediately after the new or full moon. It is believed
82 that a male birth on the night of the full moon or the next day is
777 auspicious, but if on the day of the new moon it is more inauspicious than on any other day (Reclus 1885: 203). This belief is enshrined in the saying, "The boy born on the new moon day is bad; the girl born on the full moon day is bad." (For purposes of Badaga ritual practice, and this particular belief too, a sunset ends one day and is the beginning of the next.) A birth coming on a day between the new and the full moon is lucky; whereas one between the full and the new moon is unlucky. It is exceptionally auspicious if a *son* is born at the full moon, and luckier still if this happens to be the mother's eighth delivery (though not necessarily her eighth live birth). Under these circumstances the family will "prosper like a king's." If on the other hand it is a girl who is born at the new moon, or at her mother's eighth delivery, it is then believed that the family the child marries into will prosper, and so many will want to marry her.

[551] The unfortunate boy born on the day of the new moon is called Tippa; and a girl born at the full moon is similarly Tippe. As soon as such an unlucky child has been born it is put into an old winnow and dragged a few inches across the floor. The name Tippa means "rubbish dump," and this act symbolizes throwing the baby away as rubbish: afterwards the inauspicious birth will not have a bad effect on the family. Later, at its naming ceremony, the
[553] child will be given two names so that it does not have to be called
[852] by this distasteful one.

4.7. Long ago in cases of very difficult labour Badaga midwives
845 performed Caesarean operations, using the small knife that is
752 intended for severing the umbilicus. I could not ascertain whether the wound was stitched up afterwards: in those times people did not care very much whether the mother died, provided the child was born and remained alive. Now the opposite attitude prevails. Some midwives still know how to reach into a womb and remove a dead foetus. It should be noted that if a pregnant woman dies the foetus must be cut out before disposal of the mother's corpse: from this unfortunate custom some basic surgical knowledge was undoubtedly gleaned in the past.

845 Nowadays if a woman is having a particularly difficult labour a
218 special mixture is prepared for her. Items used in this include dried ginger, pepper, cumin, clove, crude sugar, coffee powder,

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not savour the idea of that; (although if it happens nothing in particular follows). Should the infant die shortly afterwards, before it has been named, it too is treated as afterbirth material and buried at the usual cemetery. If someone asks the mournful family who has died, the answer must be "No one." 844 766

4.13. For the first day or two after birth the mother is given a hot bath four or five times daily. Up till this time she cannot bathe herself, but must have some woman help her. After that time she bathes herself in hot water, twice daily until 25 to 30 days after delivery, and thereafter once daily. Always, the water used is hot. The baby is given a bath three times daily for the first eight days, then twice a day till the nineteenth day, and thereafter once daily, in the evening only. 846 515 (854)

In the old days, the newly delivered mother was given a special preparation of little millet. This was first baked, and then boiled till it was a mushy porridge (Birch 1838: 104). Now she eats a non-liquid curry. For that peppercorns are fried in a clarified butter, then ground up on the curry grinder. Then some garlic is fried, and salt, tamarind and clarified butter mixed with it while it is kept warm beside the fire. A limited amount of this food is given to the mother twice daily until the fourth or fifth day after delivery, by an old woman who will restrict the quantity even though the mother might want more. Thereafter, for the next 20 to 40 days, according to the state of the mother's health, she continues with this as her morning meal, but in the evenings has paddy rice and lentil soup. She can take a small amount of milk, even from the day of her delivery. This can only be cow's milk, and must be boiled before drinking. It is recognized that a woman who has given birth may appear weak and ugly, and repeated births can lead to ill-health. A proverb puts it this way: "The appearance of a woman who has just given birth to one child is like the appearance of a heifer which has given birth that day." 846 262 (178) (272) (751) (539)

No woman who has given birth may touch any household utensils till the third, fifth, seventh or ninth day after the first full or new moon, I was told; alternatively it has been reported that she must first see the crescent moon before the period of pollution can end (Thurston 1909: 109). She should be given no work for eight days before or eight days after her delivery: during that fortnight her husband must provide for all her needs, even if he is on the point of divorcing her. It used to be that after five, seven, 846 821 783

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846 nine or 15 days she might begin to work in the house again (Jagor
821 1876: 199). Earlier yet, for her first birth, a woman would stay in
783 the pollution hut until the next waning of the moon. In later confinements she would remain in the hut for only three days (Birch 1838: 104). The mother of twins, even if poor, should however
845 stay at home looking after them for at least three months, with-
854 out doing any outside work.

"A girl who has delivered is a good sight; a field with good
846 crops is a good sight," according to one proverb. Within a month
539 of the birth, on an auspicious day, mother and child return to her
777 husband's house. The party must number (including both of them)
801 at least five persons, and must be of an odd number unless it exceeds 21.

846 On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old
788 man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the rice and milk, and touch the tongue of the baby with them. (Thurston 1909:109)

843 If a woman becomes pregnant for the twentieth time by the same
585 husband (a previous marriage does not count), then, whether all
851 the offspring are living or not, the couple go right through the wedding and seventh-month-of-pregnancy ceremonies again. These are performed on a lavish scale, even if the husband has to borrow substantially.

The Form and Sex of the Child

858 4.14. A proverb asks, "If a mother gives birth to a male child,
539 will the father object to it?" Obviously he will not, since it is a blessing to the family (Verghese 1963: 420). The same idea is also expressed thus: "By delivering a son she is like a prima donna standing on a vantage point and calling out;" or "The man who has begotten a son and the man who has planted a coconut [tree] will not spoil." Another saying puts it quite succinctly: "A strong boy, a weak girl;" and yet another emphasizes that girl babies are not much wanted: "Even though you repeatedly tell her, she is